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Bravo, Iliana P.

Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School

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NAVAL  
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SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

**THESIS**

**NATO'S WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION  
INITIATIVE: ACHEIVEMENT AND CHALLENGES**

by

Iliana P. Bravo

September 2003

Thesis Advisor:

David S. Yost

Second Reader:

James Wirtz

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**NATO'S WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION INITIATIVE:  
ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES**

Iliana P. Bravo  
Civilian, Department of the Navy  
B.A., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1998

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
September 2003**

Author: Iliana P. Bravo

Approved by: David S. Yost  
Thesis Advisor

James Wirtz  
Second Reader

James Wirtz  
Chairman, Department of National Security Affairs

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis analyzes the Weapons of Mass Destruction Initiative (WMDI) taken by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in April 1999. The analysis considers the achievements of the WMDI as well as the obstacles and challenges the Alliance faces in countering WMD threats. For over a decade, the Alliance has been concerned about the threats posed by biological, chemical, nuclear and radiological weapons. In 1994, NATO established the Senior Political-Military Group on Proliferation and the Senior Defense Group on Proliferation to implement alliance policy on WMD proliferation. Through the WMDI, NATO enhanced its efforts to address these threats through the establishment of a WMD Center at NATO Headquarters in Brussels to facilitate dialogue and coordination relating to threat assessment, and to develop responses to such threats. At the Prague Summit in November 2002 the Allies made firmer commitments to develop capabilities to respond to WMD threats. The new measures include the Prague Capabilities Commitment and the NATO Response Force.



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## **I. NATO'S WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTIVE INITIATIVE: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES**

This thesis offers an analysis of the origins and achievements of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Initiative (WMDI) taken by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1999. It also identifies the challenges that face NATO in developing effective capabilities to counter WMD threats. While WMD are generally defined as consisting of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, this thesis devotes particular attention to chemical and biological threats. During the Cold War, individual NATO allies addressed WMD threats mainly through deterrence and non-proliferation efforts (diplomatic means, treaties, export controls, etc.), rather than through counterproliferation strategies (preparation of forces to fight in WMD environments and to counter and defeat WMD capabilities). While the term “counterproliferation” remains controversial in some quarters, the NATO allies have since the end of the Cold War explored various means of deterrence and defense to respond to new WMD threats.

It should be clear that important underlying questions are at issue in this regard. WMD have been a fact of the international security environment for a long time-- throughout recorded history for biological weapons, since World War I for chemical weapons, and since World War II for nuclear weapons. However, the Atlantic Alliance, founded in 1949, did not choose to launch the WMD Initiative until 1999. What factors explain this belated decision? What has the Alliance been able to achieve with its initiative? What factors appear to hinder the Allies in doing more? These factors represent challenges to surmount—if the Allies truly intend to deal with the security risks and threats posed by WMD.

### **A. BACKGROUND**

Since 1990-1991, NATO has recognized that WMD threats endanger the Alliance, its territories, its populations, and its forces. The spread of WMD also erodes confidence in existing international security arrangements and could lead to further

proliferation of WMD as states begin to feel less secure. Assessments of the urgency and magnitude of the security implications associated with WMD proliferation caused the NATO allies to launch their WMD Initiative at the 1999 Washington Summit.

Following its analysis of the political and strategic origins of the WMD Initiative, this thesis also examines the WMD threats facing NATO and the Alliance's achievements to date in defining policies and developing capabilities to counter these threats. The thesis then assesses the challenges and apparent obstacles the Alliance faces in further developing effective responses to proliferation threats.

## **B. SIGNIFICANCE**

The importance of this subject was underscored by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. These attacks demonstrated the vulnerability of NATO's strongest member, the United States, to asymmetric threats, a vulnerability shared by all of the Allies. Although the terrorist attacks of September 2001 did not involve Weapons of Mass Destruction, it is widely believed that terrorist groups are actively seeking to develop or acquire WMD capabilities.

Following the attacks on the United States of 11 September 2001, NATO has stated that it intends to take measures to meet WMD threats, including those posed by non-state actors. The attacks of 11 September led the Allies to invoke Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty for the first time in the Alliance's history, thereby honoring the mutual defense commitment made by the Allies. This collective defense commitment has become increasingly important as NATO continues to expand its territory to include additional states vulnerable to WMD attacks. For this reason, it is important for the Alliance to develop the necessary capabilities, should Article 5 ever need to be invoked again as the result of a WMD attack on an Ally.

## **C. METHODOLOGY**

This thesis is based on primary sources, including various unclassified NATO documents, as well as secondary sources, particularly analyses by scholars and experts. The thesis undertakes a qualitative analysis of these sources.

## **D. ORGANIZATION**

This thesis is organized as follows. Chapter II examines the origins of NATO's Weapons of Mass Destruction Initiative, including increased awareness of WMD threats and the role played by the United States. NATO began to address WMD proliferation explicitly in December 1990. Through its December 1993 Counterproliferation Initiative, however, the United States provided the Alliance the conceptual tools and the political support that led eventually to the development of the April 1999 NATO WMD Initiative.

Chapter III provides an overview of NATO's current policies and capabilities relevant to WMD threats, as well as an assessment of achievements made through the 1999 WMD Initiative. The analysis of achievements includes the following areas: 1) the activities of the WMD Center at NATO Headquarters, 2) information-sharing, 3) non proliferation efforts by members of the Alliance, and 4) improving counterproliferation capabilities. The overview of current capabilities includes a discussion of NATO's current defense and deterrence posture.

Chapter IV analyzes the obstacles NATO faces in developing improved counter-WMD capabilities. It addresses the criteria for an effective response capability. The capability requirements include vaccine programs and de-contamination and bio-detection equipment, as well as the reorganization of forces to incorporate changes made to existing doctrine based on the adoption of these new capabilities and technologies. The obstacles include (a) consensus-building, both on assessments of the threats and on the capabilities required to counter the threats; and (b) the budgetary constraints of specific Allies. In analyzing these obstacles, the chapter attempts to shed light on the obstacles (e.g., differing national interests and priorities) impeding NATO in reaching a consensus on WMD defense requirements, despite the Alliance's desire to develop a common response to WMD threats.

Chapter V offers conclusions about NATO's achievements to date in meeting the objectives of the 1999 Weapons of Mass Destruction Initiative, and summarizes the main challenges that have yet to be met.

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## **II. ORIGINS OF THE WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION INITIATIVE**

This chapter examines the road taken by the Alliance leading to the Weapons of Mass Destruction Initiative (WMDI) in April 1999. The road signs include events which confirmed the potential spread of these weapons to states that might threaten the Alliance (e.g., the findings of the UN Special Commission in Iraq, and the possible diversion of fissile material by North Korea). The Alliance gave unprecedented consideration to the threats associated with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation and took some actions to address the problem.

The chapter then describes the WMD Initiative itself, as well as its objectives. These include, but are not limited to, (1) information-sharing, (2) defense planning, (3) non proliferation, (4) civilian protection, and (5) the WMD Center at NATO headquarters in Brussels. The chapter also clarifies the critical leadership role played by the United States in the development of NATO's WMD Initiative.

The end of the Cold War brought with it a changed international security environment. The collapse of the USSR had two main effects in promoting WMD proliferation: an end to the discipline on some regional conflicts that had been imposed by the U.S.-Soviet competition, and a diffusion of WMD technologies, materials, and expertise from the former Soviet Union. Such technologies had been sought by proliferants throughout the Cold War, but the USSR generally did not promote their diffusion. The weak post-Soviet states, including Russia, have been less capable of upholding non-proliferation policies—and less consistent in doing so—than was the USSR.

The proliferation of WMD-associated technologies, along with missiles and other delivery systems, has continued in the post-Cold War period, because the perceived political and military advantages of possessing WMD remain attractive. These apparent advantages have led to increased WMD proliferation across the globe, and in turn to a heightened awareness in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) of the need to be prepared to defend against adversaries armed with weapons of mass destruction.



## **A. INCREASING AWARENESS OF WMD THREATS**

NATO has recognized the threat that WMD proliferation poses not only to the Alliance, its territories, its populations, and its forces, but also to confidence in existing security arrangements. An erosion of this confidence could lead to further WMD proliferation as states feel less secure.

The Alliance reached this conclusion in a series of steps. The first reference to WMD proliferation in a NATO communiqué came in December 1990, when the North Atlantic Council (NAC) stated that “The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the spread of the destabilizing military technology have implications for Allies’ security and illustrate that in an ever more interdependent world, we face new security risks and challenges of a global nature...Where they pose a threat to our common interests, we will consider what individual or joint action may be most appropriate under the circumstances.”<sup>1</sup>

Following the first Gulf War in 1990-1991, the NAC reiterated its concerns over WMD threats when it noted that:

The Gulf crisis demonstrated what we have long recognized: the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and of missiles capable of delivering them, and excessive transfers of conventional arms undermine international security and increase the risk of armed conflict throughout the world. To meet this challenge, we have renewed our commitment to the earliest achievement of advances in the international forums dealing with specific proliferation issues.<sup>2</sup>

The Alliance’s new Strategic Concept of November 1991 again highlighted Alliance concerns over WMD when it stated that: “In light of the potential risks it poses, the proliferation of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction should be given special consideration. Solution of this problem will require complementary approaches

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<sup>1</sup> North Atlantic Council communiqué, 18 December 1990, par. 15.

<sup>2</sup> North Atlantic Council communiqué, 7 June 1991, par. 7.

including, for example, export control and missile defences.”<sup>3</sup> Following the announcement of NATO’s new Strategic Concept, the Rome Declaration on Peace and Cooperation reiterated NATO’s awareness of new threats:

Our Strategic Concept underlines that Alliance security must take account of the global context. It points out risks of a wider nature, including proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, disruption of the flow of vital resources and actions of terrorism and sabotage, which can affect Alliance security interests. We reaffirm the importance of arrangements existing in the Alliance for consultation among the Allies under Article 4 of the Washington Treaty and, where appropriate, coordination of our efforts including our responses to such risks.<sup>4</sup>

The Alliance repeated its determination in this regard in communiqués in 1992 and 1993. In December 1992 the NAC stated that, “We remain fully committed to ongoing efforts to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related technologies.”<sup>5</sup> In December 1993 the NAC declared, “We expressed our concern at the growing risks to Alliance security interests posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery means and related technologies. Intensified efforts are essential to prevent such proliferation and to address and counter if necessary the associated risks to Alliance security.”<sup>6</sup>

Such an acknowledgement of the threat was again articulated at the Brussels Summit in January 1994, when NATO members formally agreed on the following policy:

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means constitutes a threat to international security and is a matter of concern to NATO. We have decided to intensify and expand NATO's political and defence efforts against proliferation, taking into account the work already underway in other international fora and institutions. In this regard, we direct that work begin immediately in appropriate fora of the Alliance to develop an overall policy framework to consider how to reinforce ongoing

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<sup>3</sup> North Atlantic Council Strategic Concept, 7 November 1991, par. 49. It should be noted that published version of the 1991 Strategic Concept differ in the paragraph numbering system, because some sources number the first paragraph and others do not.

<sup>4</sup> NATO Press Communiqué S-1 (91) 86, 8 November 1991, par. 19, available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c11108a.htm>

<sup>5</sup> North Atlantic Council communiqué, 17 December 1992, par. 21.

<sup>6</sup> North Atlantic Council communiqué, 9 December 1993, par. 15.

prevention efforts and how to reduce the proliferation threat and protect against it.<sup>7</sup>

These concerns and the efforts made by NATO to prepare itself to meet future WMD threats led to the Weapons of Mass Destruction Initiative in 1999. The initiative is aimed at preventing further proliferation and at protecting Alliance security interests, should non-proliferation efforts fail. The next section of this chapter reviews the origins of the WMDI in greater detail.

### **1. Events Leading to the NATO WMD Initiative**

By 1993, “more than 25 countries, many located near NATO territory, were identified as potentially having NBC capabilities and at least half of them had operational ballistic missiles, while other countries were trying to develop them.”<sup>8</sup> In support of its collective defense and security objectives, NATO has various responsibilities and conducts operations that could be severely disrupted by the use of WMD. These responsibilities include contributing to a stable security environment in the Euro-Atlantic region, defense of allied territories, peacekeeping operations, and support to the UN and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).<sup>9</sup> NATO could also face WMD threats to its forces and civilian populations from countries on its periphery and further afield.

To implement the new alliance policy on proliferation, two groups were established in June 1994: the Senior Political-Military Group on Proliferation (SGP) and the Senior Defense Group on Proliferation (DGP). Together they constitute the Joint Committee on Proliferation (JCP), which reports directly to the North Atlantic Council. The two groups are tasked with expanding the political and military efforts to counter the proliferation threat.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> North Atlantic Council Ministerial Meeting, 10-11 January 1994, par. 17, available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940111a.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Ashton Carter and David Omand, ‘Countering the Proliferation Risks: Adapting the Alliance to the New Security Environment,’ *NATO Review* 44, no. 5 (September 1996): 10-15.

<sup>9</sup> Gregory Schulte, “Responding to Proliferation: NATO’s Role,” *NATO Review* no. 4 (July 1995): 15-19.

<sup>10</sup> David Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance’s New Roles in International Security* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), 80.

## **2. The Senior Political-Military Group on Proliferation**

According to an Alliance fact sheet, “The SGP considers a range of factors in the political, security and economic fields that may cause or influence proliferation and discusses political and economic means to prevent or respond to proliferation.”<sup>11</sup>

The SGP is made up of representatives from each member state and is chaired by the NATO Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs. The SGP began its work by examining the various factors that often influence and/or lead states to seek weapons of mass destruction. These factors include domestic proponents, security concerns and economics.<sup>12</sup> The Allies intend to determine the underlying sources of conflict as well as the varying local factors contributing to proliferation.

## **3. The Senior Defense Group on Proliferation**

The military dimension of NATO’s policy framework on proliferation is assigned to the DGP. According to an Alliance fact sheet, “The DGP addresses the military capabilities needed to discourage WMD proliferation, to deter threats and use of such weapons, and to protect NATO populations, territory and forces.”<sup>13</sup> This includes identifying ways to protect NATO’s forces, civilian populations, and territories from nuclear, biological, or chemical (NBC) attacks in view of the risks of deterrence failure. This means that the DGP is responsible for the “protection component”—to use the terminology outlined in the U.S. Defense Counterproliferation Initiative in 1993. The DGP is co-chaired by a North American and a European member state on a rotating basis. The Steering Group within the DGP is charged with addressing issues involving command, control, communications, and intelligence (C3I), deterrence, and potential operations.

The DGP began its work in 1994 by conducting a three-phase studies program to assess the risks and threats posed to the Alliance by WMD, and to determine the

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<sup>11</sup> NATO Fact Sheet, “Weapons of Mass Destruction Centre,” updated 03 April 2002, available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/facts/2000/wmd.htm>

<sup>12</sup> Jeffrey Larsen, “The Development of an Agreed NATO Policy on Nonproliferation,” (NATO Fellowship <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/95-97/larsen.pdf>)

<sup>13</sup> NATO Fact Sheet, “Weapons of Mass Destruction Centre,” updated 03 April 2002, available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/facts/2000/wmd.htm>

implications of these threats for NATO's defense posture. It also examined the adequacy of the capabilities which NATO had at this time to counter these threats. The goals of the DGP were to provide policy recommendations for improving NATO's defense posture and capabilities.

Phase I of the study focused on the proliferation threats facing NATO. This produced a classified document on risk assessments, which revealed a consensus among member states as to the "extent, nature, and direction of the risks posed by NBC proliferation."<sup>14</sup> The concluding documentation of the Phase I study also took into consideration the expected trends of NBC proliferation up to the year 2010. The forecast of proliferation trends through 2010 was based upon data regarding the transfers known at that time of technologies, expertise, and supplies to countries near NATO territory. It became apparent that there was not only a need to differentiate between the types of weapons that could be employed to pose threats, since each would require differing protection measures, but also a need to analyze the differing entities that could constitute threats.<sup>15</sup> For example, proliferant states could develop and use nuclear weapons, whereas non-state actors such as terrorist groups might be more likely to acquire and employ chemical or biological weapons.<sup>16</sup>

Phase II of the DGP's study used the results of the risk assessment and threat analysis to identify the implications of the proliferation of WMD threats for NATO's defense posture, and the measures required to improve it. This phase of the study was divided into two parts: Phase IIA and IIB.<sup>17</sup> Phase IIA considered how the range of contingencies of concern to NATO could be altered by the presence or use of NBC weapons and delivery systems in the arsenals of adversaries. Phase IIB attempted to identify the range of capabilities needed by the Alliance to respond to such threats. Together, Phase IIA and IIB addressed the possible repercussions of WMD threats for the security of NATO populations and territories, as well as for NATO's ability to conduct

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<sup>14</sup> Ashton Carter and David Omand, "Countering the Proliferation Risks: Adapting the Alliance to the New Security Environment," *NATO Review* 44, no. 5 (September 1996): 10-15.

<sup>15</sup> Jeffrey Larsen, "The Development of an Agreed NATO Policy on Nonproliferation," 18.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Jeffrey Larsen, *NATO Counterproliferation Policy: A Case Study in Alliance Politics*, Occasional Paper no. 17 (Colorado: INSS, November 1997), 15.

non-Article 5 missions such as peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. In these types of contingencies, an adversary could threaten WMD use to coerce the Alliance into staying out of regional conflicts in which it might otherwise intervene.

Phase II of the study determined that the greatest threat of WMD proliferation was to NATO's deployed forces. It concluded that protection of these forces should be an Alliance priority. In making this determination, the Alliance also took into account the varying characteristics of each NBC weapon and the possible military effects desired by an adversary.<sup>18</sup> For example, in addition to causing casualties, chemical weapons also could be used to cause a large psychological impact on the civilian population, whereas biological weapons could be used to kill troops or to cause severely debilitating physical effects, making this an attractive choice to an adversary attempting to interrupt military operations. The consequences of chemical or biological weapons use could be limited by both passive defenses (e.g., protective clothing and gas masks for personnel) and active defenses (e.g., air and missile defenses). Additional defenses could include counterforce, intelligence, and battle management capabilities.<sup>19</sup> However, the prevention of nuclear weapons use could require measures different from those required to prevent the use of chemical and biological weapons. All of these considerations were taken into account by the Alliance in determining the capabilities needed to respond to WMD threats. The results were presented in a classified report to the North Atlantic Council in November 1995.<sup>20</sup>

The third and final phase of the study conducted by the DGP identified the shortcomings of NATO's capabilities at that time, including areas requiring corrective action. In identifying defense requirements for the Alliance, the DGP hoped to encourage continued threat assessment analysis in future Alliance defense planning. Prior to the identification of required force capabilities by the DGP, the average time for the enactment of change in defense planning guidance was two years. However, following the DGP's recommendations for enhancing NATO's defense capabilities, the Defense

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<sup>18</sup> Ashton Carter and David Omand, 'Countering the Proliferation Risks: Adapting the Alliance to the New Security Environment,' *NATO Review*, 44, no. 5 (September 1996):10-15.

<sup>19</sup> Jeffrey Larsen, "The Development of an Agreed NATO Policy on Nonproliferation," 21.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.,19.

Ministers approved an acceleration of the process to correct any deficiencies in capabilities in a shorter span of time.<sup>21</sup> Additional recommendations in Phase II of the study called for increased multinational training and exercises, improvements in common defense policies, new operational plans, and revisions in existing doctrines and plans.

To accomplish these goals, the DGP developed a comprehensive program of thirty-nine Action Plans encompassing the broad spectrum of NATO bodies.<sup>22</sup> Specifically, each NATO body would work on meeting the requirements recommended by the DGP in Phase II of its report to the North Atlantic Council. By assigning defined priorities and requirements in each action plan, the DGP would be able to monitor the accomplishments of specific NATO bodies in pursuing the collective goal of effectively responding to WMD threats. The DGP would then report the status of efforts to meet the original objectives to Defense Ministers.

However, the ability to meet many of the proposed capability requirements requires an increased budget. Most member states had declared their inability to contribute additional spending for new projects. Thus, NATO had to decide whether existing capabilities could effectively address WMD threats. If they could not, who would pay for new capabilities? The fiscal situation in which each state finds itself often limits its willingness to spend on military capabilities. This then influences its position on what actions NATO should take. Countries in which the general consensus is that existing approaches to non-proliferation are sufficient are less likely to engage in additional spending to improve national and/or collective NATO defense capabilities as recommended by the DGP.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, many nations in the Alliance already possess advanced technologies that can serve to enhance NATO's defense posture against WMD threats.<sup>24</sup> Ultimately, further steps by the Allies will be required to accomplish DGP goals.

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<sup>21</sup> Ashton Carter and David Omand, "Countering the Proliferation Risks: Adapting the Alliance to the New Security Environment," *NATO Review*, 44, no. 5 (September 1996): 10-15.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Joseph, "NATO's Response to the Proliferation Challenge," *INSS Strategic Forum*, no. 66 (March 1996): 4.

<sup>24</sup> Lieutenant General Malcolm O'Neill, "Challenges of Counterproliferation for the New NATO," available at <http://www.csdrr.org/95Books/O'Neill.htm>

#### **4. Approval of the WMD Initiative (1999)**

The findings made by the DGP and SGP since their establishment in 1994 contributed to NATO's Weapons of Mass Destruction Initiative in 1999. The 1999 Washington Summit Communiqué set forth the Alliance's awareness of WMD threats and its commitment to actively address them:

The proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons and their means of delivery can pose a direct military threat to Allies' populations, territory, and forces and therefore continues to be a matter of serious concern for the Alliance. The principal non-proliferation goal of the Alliance and its members is to prevent proliferation from occurring, or, should it occur, to reverse it through diplomatic means. We reiterate our full support for the international non-proliferation regimes and their strengthening. We recognize progress made in this regard. In order to respond to the risks to Alliance security posed by the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery means, we have launched an Initiative that builds upon work since the Brussels Summit to improve overall Alliance political and military efforts in this area.

The WMD Initiative will: ensure a more vigorous, structured debate at NATO leading to strengthened common understanding among Allies on WMD issues and how to respond to them; improve the quality and quantity of intelligence and information-sharing among Allies on proliferation issues; support the development of a public information strategy by Allies to increase awareness of proliferation issues and Allies' efforts to support non-proliferation efforts; enhance existing Allied programmes which increase military readiness to operate in a WMD environment and to counter WMD threats; strengthen the process of information exchange about Allies' national programmes of bilateral WMD destruction and assistance; enhance the possibilities for Allies to assist one another in the protection of their civil populations against WMD risks; and create a WMD Centre within the International Staff at NATO to support these efforts. The WMD initiative will integrate political and military aspects of Alliance work in responding to proliferation.<sup>25</sup>

Supporting and participating in disarmament and non-proliferation regimes constitute an important way in which the NATO Allies are pursuing their goal of preventing further proliferation. Additional contributions to NATO's non-proliferation efforts are found in the Weapons of Mass Destruction Initiative. The initiative helps to promote dialogue and action within NATO to address the threat of WMD by integrating

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<sup>25</sup> NATO Press Release NAC-S(99)64, 24 April 1999, paragraphs 30 and 31, available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-064e.htm>



the work performed by the SGP and the DGP concerning the political and military requirements to respond to a threat.<sup>26</sup> At its commencement, the initiative outlined the following five elements to effectively accomplish this task: intelligence-sharing, defense planning, non-proliferation, civilian protection, and the previously mentioned WMD Center.<sup>27</sup>

In the realm of intelligence-sharing, the Allies have committed themselves to increase the amount of intelligence they share with respect to WMD, and to improve the quality of the intelligence gathered. The Allies intend to “develop a more comprehensive shared assessment of the evolving threat.”<sup>28</sup> The defense planning element of the initiative seeks to enhance the military capabilities of the Alliance. This includes improving the readiness of forces to operate in WMD environments and to effectively counter WMD threats.

With regard to non-proliferation, the Alliance has expanded its efforts to increase awareness of the proliferation threat. The Allies have done so by reaffirming their support for existing non-proliferation regimes and treaties, such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The objective is to identify areas in which additional work is required to enhance the effectiveness of non-proliferation regimes.

The Alliance is also concerned with the protection of its civilian populations in the event of WMD attacks. The Alliance has therefore increased its efforts to coordinate possible responses to a WMD attack on its civilian populations and has collected data about available medical stockpiles and expertise. In addition, the Allies have taken steps to be able to provide military aid in consequence management following an attack.

At the heart of the initiative is the WMD Center. The purpose of the center is to facilitate Alliance-wide dialogue, action, and coordination on proliferation matters. As stated by Ted Whiteside, Head of NATO’s WMD Center, “[It] is an interdisciplinary team in the Political Affairs Division of NATO. It was established in order to support the

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<sup>26</sup> Crispin Hain-Cole, “The Summit Initiative on Weapons of Mass Destruction: Rationale and Aims,” *NATO Review*, 47, no.2 (Summer 1999): 33-34.

<sup>27</sup> M2 Presswire, “The White House: NATO Summit—Weapons of Mass Destruction Initiative,” Conventry, 27 April 1999, available at <http://proquest.umi.com/pdqweb?ROT=307&JSEnabled=1&TS=1007942938>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

work of committees and working groups dealing with proliferation issues.”<sup>29</sup> Created in the fall of 2000, the WMD Center functions as the Alliance’s focal point of expertise and effort in combating the proliferation of WMD. The Center has six broad objectives:

- to ensure a vigorous debate at NATO leading to strengthened common understanding among Allies on WMD issues and how to respond to them;
- to improve the quality and quantity of intelligence and information sharing among Allies on proliferation issues;
- to support the development of a public-information strategy by Allies to increase awareness of proliferation issues and Allies’ efforts to support non-proliferation efforts;
- to enhance military readiness to operate in a WMD environment and to counter WMD threats;
- to strengthen the exchange of information concerning national programs for bilateral WMD destruction and assistance--specifically how to help Russia destroy its stockpiles of chemical weapons; and
- to enhance the possibilities for Allies to assist one another in the protection of their civil populations against WMD risks.<sup>30</sup>

Efforts by the Alliance to effectively address the WMD threat continue today.

Many shortcomings persist with respect to capabilities. At the November 2002 Prague Summit, the Allies reaffirmed their commitment to defend against possible WMD threats:

We are determined to deter, disrupt, defend and protect against any attacks on us, in accordance with the Washington Treaty and the Charter of the United Nations. In order to carry out the full range of its missions, NATO must be able to field forces that can move quickly to wherever they are needed, upon decision by the North Atlantic Council, to sustain operations over distance and time, including in an environment where they might be faced with nuclear, biological and chemical threats, and to achieve their objectives. <sup>31</sup>

At Prague, the heads of state and government also declared that while individual Allies had made commitments to improve their capabilities for nuclear, biological, and chemical defense, several additional measures related to the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery were needed. These measures are discussed in Chapter III.

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<sup>29</sup> NATO Review, “Ted Whiteside: Head of NATO’s WMD Centre,” *NATO Review* 49, no.4 (Winter 2001): 22-23.

<sup>30</sup> NATO Fact Sheets, “Weapons of Mass Destruction Centre,” updated 3 April 2002, available at <http://nato.int/docu/facts/2000/wmd.htm>

<sup>31</sup> NATO Press Release, Prague Summit Declaration, 21 November 2002, par. 4.

## **B. THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES**

In 1993 the United States launched a new initiative addressing WMD proliferation known as the Defense Counterproliferation Initiative (CPI). A Presidential Decision Directive in 1993 announced by then-Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, this initiative sought to change the United States' former approach of deterrence focused primarily on prevention, to one combining prevention with protection in order "to make a complete attack on the problem."<sup>32</sup>

To respond to the president, we have created the Defense Counterproliferation Initiative. With this initiative, we are making the essential change demanded by this increased threat. We are adding the task of protection to the task of prevention.

In past administrations, the emphasis was on prevention. The policy of nonproliferation combined global diplomacy and regional security efforts with the denial of material and know-how to would-be proliferators. Prevention remains our preeminent goal....

The Defense Counterproliferation Initiative in no way means we will lessen our nonproliferation efforts. In fact, DOD's work will strengthen prevention. What the Defense Counterproliferation Initiative recognizes, however, is that proliferation may still occur. Thus, we are adding protection as a major policy goal.

At the heart of the Defense Counterproliferation Initiative, therefore, is a drive to develop new military capabilities to deal with this new threat. It has five elements: One, creation of the new mission by the president; two, changing what we buy to meet the threat; three, planning to fight wars differently; four, changing how we collect intelligence and what intelligence we collect; and finally, five, doing all these things with our allies.<sup>33</sup>

With respect to allies, Aspin referred to NATO in particular: "We have tabled an initiative with NATO to increase alliance efforts against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction."<sup>34</sup> The U.S. CPI therefore contributed to the formation of NATO's WMD Initiative. As Aspin's emphasis on "protection" suggests, one of the purposes of the CPI

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<sup>32</sup> Les Aspin, Counterproliferation Initiative, Presidential Decision Directive PDD/NSC, 18 December 1993, available at <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd18.htm++Defense+Counterproliferation+Initiative&hl=en&ie=UTF-8>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

was to find ways in which the United States could counter threats arising from WMD proliferation through deterrence by denial. Deterrence by denial, as Glenn Snyder suggests, involves capabilities to defend oneself in the event that deterrence by threat of punishment should fail.<sup>35</sup> The self-defense capabilities are intended to convince the enemy that he will not be able to achieve his operational objectives and thereby discourage any attack. Recognizing the changed nature of threats following the Cold War, the United States changed its focus from deterrence by threat of punishment or retaliation, to deterrence based on an ability to deny the enemy achievement of his operational objectives. In effect, as Kerry Kartchner notes, the United States “must redesign deterrence to be proactive rather than reactive,” as is the case with deterrence by threat of punishment.<sup>36</sup>

To ensure the success of the counterproliferation initiative, the United States determined that cooperation in this effort by its NATO allies would be required. Up to this point, NATO had primarily focused on supporting nonproliferation regimes that aim to prevent proliferation, but had not addressed the issues of prevention and protection should nonproliferation efforts fail. Therefore, the Alliance began its own studies to assess its capabilities to deal with WMD threats. The Allies did not, however, adopt the U.S. term *counterproliferation* because some of them felt that this term implied the use of military force to take offensive and preemptive action against proliferators with or without the approval of the UN Security Council. Allies within NATO wanted to prevent “any thought of a mandate-free solitary NATO action,” and/or stop U.S. unilateral action.<sup>37</sup>

America’s concern over possible WMD threats mounted during and after the 1990-91 Gulf War. The threat of chemical and biological weapons (CW/BW) use by Iraq and the inability of U.S. forces to operate at optimal effectiveness in a CW or BW

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<sup>35</sup> Glenn Snyder, *Deterrence by Denial and Punishment*, Research Monograph no. 1 (Princeton: Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Studies, Center of International Studies, Princeton University, 2 January 1959), 2.

<sup>36</sup> Kerry Kartchner, “Missile Defenses and New Approaches to Deterrence,” *U.S. Foreign Policy Agenda*, An Electronic Journal of the U.S. Department of State 7, no.2 (July 2002), available at <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/0702/ijpe0702.htm>

<sup>37</sup> Harald Müller, “Counterproliferation and the Nonproliferation Regime: A View from Germany,” in Mitchel Reiss and Harald Müller, eds. *International Perspectives on Counterproliferation* (Working Paper no. 99, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, January 1995): 30.

environment made it evident that the risks in probable future conflicts involving WMD would be high, and that new ways of deterring and coping with WMD use were needed. The CPI's intended purpose was to add a component of deterrence by denial capability to the long-standing capability of deterrence by threat of punishment. That is, the United States intends to degrade the utility and effectiveness of an adversary's potential use of WMD by preparing and protecting U.S. military forces against these weapons. Force protection became essential to the success of future combat operations, and therefore a central theme in this initiative.

Other events have also confirmed the existence of WMD threats to the United States and its NATO allies. "In August 1995 Iraq admitted having produced large volumes of weapons-grade biological materials for use in the 1990-1991 Gulf war."<sup>38</sup> However, the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM), tasked with locating and destroying Iraq's WMD, was unable to determine the exact extent of the Iraqi biological weapons program:

Iraq denied that it had any offensive BW programme until July 1995...Iraq now claims that its BW programme was "obliterated" in 1991 through the unilateral destruction of the weapons deployed, bulk agent and some documents associated with the programme. Notwithstanding this claim, which is itself unverifiable, it is established that Iraq retained the facilities, growth media, equipment and groupings of core technical personnel of its BW programme.<sup>39</sup>

The Commission is especially concerned by Iraq's continuing failure to provide definite figures on amounts of biological weapons agents and munitions produced, weaponized and destroyed. In the absence of such figures, accompanied by supporting documentation, it is not possible to establish a material balance of proscribed items, nor is it possible for the Commission to provide an assessment to the Security Council that Iraq does not retain biological weapons agents and munitions.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Sarah Graham-Brow and Chris Toensing, "Why Another War? A Backgrounder on the Iraq Crisis," *Middle East Research and Information Project*, Second Edition, December 2002, p. 5.

<sup>39</sup> UN Document S/1998/332 of 16 April 1998, par. 61, available at <http://www.un.org/Depts/unscom/sres98-332.htm>

<sup>40</sup> UN Document S/1995/1038 of 17 December 1995, par. 65, available at <http://www.un.org/Depts/unscom/sres95-1038.htm>

The Allies have also been concerned about North Korean nuclear and missile programs, particularly since the 1992-94 crisis that began when Pyongyang was suspected of diverting fissile material into a weapons program, following repeated refusals of safeguard inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).<sup>41</sup> These safeguards were applied by the IAEA in 1992 “on all source or special fissionable material in all peaceful nuclear activities within the territory of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, under its jurisdiction or carried out under its control anywhere, for the exclusive purpose of verifying that such material is not diverted to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.”<sup>42</sup> North Korea’s expulsion of IAEA monitors and the announcement of its withdrawal from the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in January 2003, a withdrawal that took effect in April 2003, have once again left the United States and the world wondering about its nuclear intentions.<sup>43</sup>

Additional WMD proliferation concerns for the NATO allies include countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia that are actively seeking WMD capabilities and associated technologies,<sup>44</sup> and the suspected smuggling of fissile material out of the former Soviet Union. Moreover, the diffusion of dual-use technologies has complicated the promotion of nonproliferation.

These world events in conjunction with emerging preparations by the United States to deal with threats of WMD use via its Counterproliferation Initiative helped to bring the Alliance to the realization that it too was vulnerable to these threats. In short, the origins of NATO’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Initiative reside in the international security environment and the efforts by key Allies, notably the United States, to devise appropriate countervailing strategies.

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<sup>41</sup> Jeffrey Larsen, “The Development of an Agreed NATO Policy on Nonproliferation,” p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> International Atomic Energy Agency, “Agreement of 30 January 1992 between the Government of the DPRK and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards in Connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,” Informational Circular 403 (Unofficial Electronic Version) <http://www.iaea.org/worldatom/Documents/Infcircs/Others/inf403.shtml>

<sup>43</sup> The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Article 10, available at <http://disarmament.un.org/wmd/npt/npttext.html>

<sup>44</sup> Jeffrey Larsen, “The Development of an Agreed NATO Policy on Nonproliferation,” p.4, available at <http://nato.int/acad/fellow/95-97/larsen.pdf>

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### **III. ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE WMDI**

The introduction of the WMD Initiative in April 1999 led NATO to establish the WMD Center in May 2000 as an additional measure to respond to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As previously mentioned, the Senior Political-Military Group on Proliferation (SGP) is tasked with responding to proliferation through political and diplomatic means. The Senior Defense Group on Proliferation (DGP) is tasked with assessing the military capabilities required by the Alliance to deal with the WMD threat. Together, these groups evaluate NATO's ability to respond to threats in the new security environment. This chapter examines the progress NATO has made since 1999 in meeting the objectives it set forth in the Weapons of Mass Destruction Initiative.

#### **A. OVERVIEW OF CURRENT POLICIES AND CAPABILITIES**

In November 2002 the Alliance's heads of state and government gathered in Prague to discuss, among other topics, the commitments made by individual Allies to improve their military capabilities to take action against nuclear, biological, and chemical threats. At the same time, the Allies reaffirmed their preference for diplomatic solutions to respond to such threats. In the Prague Summit Declaration the Allies announced that they had decided to:

Approve the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC) as part of the continuing Alliance effort to improve and develop new military capabilities for modern warfare in a high threat environment. Individual Allies have made firm and specific political commitments to improve their capabilities in the areas of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defence...We will implement all aspects of our Prague Capabilities Commitment as quickly as possible. We will take the necessary steps to improve capabilities in the identified areas of continuing capability shortfalls...We are committed to pursuing vigorously capability improvements...

Endorse the agreed military concept for defence against terrorism. The concept is part of a package of measures to strengthen NATO's capabilities in this area, which also includes improved intelligence sharing and crisis response arrangements...We are committed, in cooperation with our partners, to fully implement the Civil Emergency Planning (CEP) Action Plan for the improvement of civil preparedness against possible attacks against the civilian population with chemical, biological or



radiological (CBR) agents. We will enhance our ability to provide support, when requested, to help national authorities to deal with the consequences of terrorist attacks, including attacks with CBRN against critical infrastructure, as foreseen in the CEP Action Plan.

Endorse the implementation of five nuclear, biological and chemical weapons defence initiatives, which will enhance the Alliance's defence capabilities against weapons of mass destruction: a Prototype Deployable NBC Analytical Laboratory; a Prototype NBC Event Response team; a virtual Centre of Excellence for NBC Weapons Defence; a NATO Biological and Chemical Defence Stockpile; and a Disease Surveillance system. We reaffirm our commitment to augment and improve expeditiously our NBC defence capabilities.

...We support the enhancement of the role of the WMD Centre within the International Staff to assist the work of the Alliance in tackling this threat.

We reaffirm that disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation make an essential contribution to preventing the spread and use of WMD and their means of delivery. We stress the importance of abiding by and strengthening existing multilateral non-proliferation and export control regimes and international arms control and disarmament accords.<sup>45</sup>

These statements at the Prague Summit deal with detecting, preventing, and responding to the threat of WMD. They reflect the political commitments by individual Allies to improve both their military capabilities and civil preparedness against possible WMD attacks, and to strengthen their political efforts against the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. According to NATO statements, the PCC includes “firm political commitments to improve capabilities in more the 400 specific areas,” including intelligence and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defense.<sup>46</sup>

The predecessor to the PCC, the Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI), was announced by NATO in April 1999. Although the DCI also sought to improve military capabilities required to counter WMD threats, “only 50 percent of DCI commitments” had been met by May 2001,<sup>47</sup> according to Ambassador Alexander Vershbow, then the

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<sup>45</sup> NATO Press Release, Prague Summit Declaration, 21 November 2002, par. 4, sections c-e, g, available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm>

<sup>46</sup> “NATO After Prague: New Members, New Capabilities, New Relations,” available at [http://www.nato.int/docu/0211prague/after\\_prague.pdf](http://www.nato.int/docu/0211prague/after_prague.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> “Vershbow remarks on Euro-Atlantic Security, Defense,” *Aerotech News and Review* 18 May 2001, F8, available at [http://www.aerotechnews.com/starc/2001/051801/NATO\\_DC1.html](http://www.aerotechnews.com/starc/2001/051801/NATO_DC1.html)

U.S. Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Council. The PCC may have better prospects for success than the DCI due to the firm commitments of individual allies. In contrast, the DCI lacked specific deadlines and comparable national commitments.

## **B. ASSESSMENT OF WMDI ACHIEVEMENTS**

As stated in Chapter II, the objectives of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Initiative included the establishment of the WMD Center at NATO Headquarters, as well as improved information-sharing among Allies, defense planning, nonproliferation efforts, and civilian protection. This section focuses on the progress made in the WMD Center since its creation, the continuance of NATO's support for international nonproliferation efforts, and improvements in counterproliferation capabilities.

### **1. WMD Center**

Twenty-seven committees and working groups within NATO deal with WMD issues, but the WMD Center is NATO's nucleus for facilitating dialogue, action, and coordination relating to WMD proliferation threat assessment, and for developing responses to such threats.

The WMD Center has listed a number of current achievements:

- Extensive database and data repository...
- Ongoing assessments of proliferation issues...
- Force Protection issues...
- Briefings to countries outside NATO ("Partners")...
- Exercises<sup>48</sup>

These achievements deserve further discussion.

As suggested above, a WMD document repository has been created to contain WMD-related documents (e.g., "NATO staff intelligence, national contributions, open sources, multimedia, and so on"). Assessments of proliferation issues concentrate on geographical areas of particular concern to NATO, especially those on the periphery of its territory. Assessments are also made on the development of biological and chemical weapons and of missiles and other delivery systems. Moreover, assessments have been

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<sup>48</sup> "The Weapons of Mass Destruction Centre (WMD Centre)" a presentation by the International Staff, NATO HQ, April 2003.

made with regard to the protection of forces by identifying risks that could turn into threats, developing new approaches to counter chemical threats, and studying future equipment requirements.

Expert-level briefings have been given to PfP countries, including Russia, and to the Mediterranean Dialogue countries with regard to political and military efforts against the proliferation of WMD, threat assessments, and defense responses.

Finally, crisis management exercises, such as CMX 2002, have been conducted in order to offer high level staff and political decision makers the opportunity to consider the challenges that might well arise in actual contingencies. In CMX 2002, Alliance officials had to deal with the possibility of an attack with biological and chemical weapons against Turkey. According to a journalistic account, “Although the aim of the exercise was not to carry out a particular response but rather to assess courses of action, the deep disagreements that arose over the possible options do not bode well for future decision-making in a real crisis situation.”<sup>49</sup>

The Allies have added objectives for the WMD Center since its founding. In April 2003, the WMD Center noted that its current tasks include:

- To improve co-ordination of all WMD-related defence and political activities at NATO
- To strengthen non-proliferation related political consultations and defence efforts to improve the preparedness of Alliance forces
- To improve the quality and quantity of intelligence and information sharing amongst Allies on WMD and proliferation
- To prepare and assist national efforts to protect civil populations against WMD.<sup>50</sup>

These new objectives are articulated in general terms, and it would not be possible to conduct a thorough assessment of achievements in meeting them without access to extensive “insider” and/or classified information.

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<sup>49</sup> Annalisa Monaco and Sharon Riggle, “NATO Squares Off with the Middle East Foe: Threat of WMD Challenges Alliance,” *NATO Notes*, vol. 4, no. 2 (1 March 2002): 2.

<sup>50</sup> “The Weapons of Mass Destruction Centre (WMD Centre)” a presentation by the International Staff, NATO HQ, April 2003.

In May 2003, the head of the WMD Center, Ted Whiteside, outlined in an interview the new WMD-related initiatives NATO launched at the November 2002 summit in Prague. These initiatives are geared towards countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. According to Whiteside, these initiatives cover the following three broad areas:

The first is to examine options for addressing the increasing threat of missile proliferation and the threat this constitutes to Alliance territories, populations and forces. Heads of State and Government agreed that we would launch a new feasibility study to look into possible missile defence configurations to protect Alliance territories, populations and forces...

The second initiative is in the area of defence against nuclear, biological, chemical, [and] radiological weapons. There were five initiatives which were launched last year and the Heads of State and Government endorsed rapid implementation of these initiatives. The five initiatives are to constitute an event response force to counter these types of threats, to set up deployable laboratories to assess what type of agents one might be dealing with. Third, to look at the creation of a medical surveillance system. Fourth, to create a stockpile of pharmaceutical and other medical counter-measures to react to such threats and lastly, to improve training across the whole spectrum in this area.

The third block of initiatives at Prague was to endorse the implementation of the civil emergency plan of action for this particular threat and there, particularly, to share national assets across NATO and with partners.<sup>51</sup>

These initiatives are relatively new and sufficient time has not passed to evaluate their achievements. However, Whiteside expressed the following expectation: "In the immediate term, the five defensive measures that I have talked about mean that the Alliance will have the ability to deploy these assets already late in the fall of 2003."<sup>52</sup>

## **2. Non Proliferation Efforts**

NATO has also continued its efforts to contribute to the prevention of the proliferation and/or use of WMD and associated means of delivery. A 1995 NATO Press Release declared that "the principal objective of the Alliance is to prevent proliferation, or, if it occurs, to reverse it through diplomatic means. In this regard, NATO seeks to

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<sup>51</sup> NATO HQ, "Video-interview with Ted Whiteside," 22 May 2003, available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2003/s030522b.htm>

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

support, without duplicating, work already underway in other international fora and institutions.’<sup>53</sup>

As stated in the Prague Summit Declaration, NATO Allies support and participate in existing international bodies and organizations that focus on nonproliferation. These include export control regimes and arms control and disarmament accords. As stated by Ted Whiteside,

We’re trying to assist non-proliferation regimes in the world. NATO Allies support all of the non-proliferation efforts in the world. A couple of examples: NATO Allies have spoken out in the past, supporting the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We want it to be universal. We want it to be strongly enforced. In the same way, NATO is working with international organizations such as the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, to talk about how to create joint exercises at some stage, which would exercise a response to the potential threat coming from chemical weapons.

In the same vein, we’re working closely with organizations such as Interpol and the World Health Organization, to be aware of their programmes which, in many ways, are running in the same directions as those of NATO.<sup>54</sup>

### **3. Improving Counterproliferation Capabilities**

In addition to NATO’S continuing efforts to contribute to international nonproliferation measures, individual Allies have promised to develop the military capabilities needed to prevent or defend against an attack by an adversary using WMD. Prior to the WMDI, the Senior Political-Military Group on Proliferation and the Senior Defense Group on Proliferation had been the only two bodies tasked with analyzing the actual threat and developing possible responses. Following the WMDI, the WMD Center became responsible for aiding the efforts of the SGP and DGP. With an explicit acknowledgement of the threat, individual Allies have recently made firm political commitments to improve their military capabilities in chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defense.

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<sup>53</sup> NATO Press Release, “NATO’s Response to Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: Facts and Way Ahead,” 29 November 1995, available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1995/p95-124.htm>

<sup>54</sup> NATO HQ, “Video-interview with Ted Whiteside,” 22 May 2003.

The Allies also have committed themselves to protecting their civilian populations against possible attacks with chemical, biological, or radiological agents through implementation of a Civil Emergency Planning (CEP) Action Plan. The CEP originally had four primary functions:

- Transforming the focus from civil defence and wartime mobilization to an all-hazards approach to CEP and the protection of civilian populations;
- Developing effective crisis management and response capabilities;
- Fostering regional cooperation and interoperability; and
- Promoting civil-military cooperation.<sup>55</sup>

The CEP evolved from a 1992 NATO workshop on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief. After the launching of NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program in 1994, the CEP led to disaster-related cooperation activities with these partner countries. The CEP soon broadened to include civil emergency planning activities, which now also encompass preparations for dealing with the consequences of possible attacks using chemical, biological, or radiological agents.

The Alliance has also committed itself to creating a NATO Response Force (NRF). At a meeting of NATO Defense Ministers in Warsaw in September 2002, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld advocated the creation of this new NATO force. He stated that, "If NATO does not have a force that is quick and agile, which can deploy in days or weeks instead of months or years, then it will not have much to offer the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century."<sup>56</sup> This proposed strike force of 20,000 Allied troops will

consist of a technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable force, including land, sea and air elements ready to move quickly to wherever needed. It will serve two distinct but mutually reinforcing purposes. First, it will provide a high-readiness force able to move quickly to wherever it may be required to carry out the full range of Alliance missions. Second, the NRF will be a catalyst for focusing and promoting improvements in the Alliance's military capabilities and, more

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<sup>55</sup> NATO Fact Sheet, "Civil Emergency Planning in the Framework of the EAPC," updated 9 August 2000, available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/facts/2000/cep-eapc.htm>

<sup>56</sup> Rumsfeld quoted in Reuters News Agency, "U.S. Proposes worldwide NATO Strike Force," *The Globe and Mail*, 24 September 2002, available at <http://www.globeandmail.com/servlet/ArticleNews/front/RTGAM/20020924/wnato0924/Front/homeBN/breakingnews>

generally, for their continuing transformation to meet evolving security challenges.<sup>57</sup>

The NRF is intended to be fully operational by October 2006.

Although the 1999 Weapons of Mass Destruction Initiative has some genuine achievements to its credit, the initiatives at the 2002 Prague Summit seem much more ambitious. Given political will and perseverance on the part of the Allies, the new initiatives may achieve much more visible results, commencing with the full operational availability of the NATO Response Force in 2006.

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<sup>57</sup> NATO Office of Information and Press, "NATO after Prague: New Members, New Capabilities, New Relations," December 2002, 4, available at [http://www.nato.int/docu/0211prague/after\\_prague.pdf](http://www.nato.int/docu/0211prague/after_prague.pdf)

## **IV. OBSTACLES TO DEVELOPING A RESPONSE CAPABILITY**

At the 2002 Prague Summit, the Allies made promising commitments to improve their response capabilities against weapons of mass destruction. However, improving these capabilities has been a goal of the Alliance since at least 1994, when it established the Senior Political-Military Group on Proliferation and the Senior Defense Group on Proliferation.

Why has the Alliance's progress in making these improvements appeared comparatively slow to critics? As the experience with the 1999 Defense Capabilities Initiative suggests, national political commitments have in some cases been insufficient; and it is hoped that the new approach with the Prague Capabilities Commitment will produce better results. Although the Allies have been aware for decades of the threats from WMD and their potential severity, it seems that they have had neither the consensus nor the will to actively develop capabilities to properly address these threats until recent years. Although the WMDI reflected a consensus within NATO acknowledging that WMD threats should be of concern to the Allies, the Allies are still defining methods to deal with specific types of threats.

This chapter discusses how NATO continues to face major internal challenges that may inhibit progress in achieving its goals of developing effective capabilities to respond to nuclear, chemical, and biological attacks. Although individual Allies have demonstrated the will to develop response capabilities, NATO still lacks a common threat assessment.

### **A. CONSENSUS-BUILDING**

NATO has always faced challenges in consensus building. Each of the Allies has its own views and priorities regarding various issues. The United States and some of its European Allies fundamentally disagree on how to deal with weapons of mass destruction threats. This was evident in the diplomacy concerning the disarmament of Iraq in the months prior to the U.S.-led military campaign in March-April 2003. The United States held that the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, posed an immediate threat in



that he might transfer WMD to terrorists, and argued that his regime must therefore be disarmed by force if necessary. Some European Allies, on the other hand, maintained that the problem of disarming Iraq could be dealt with through diplomatic means and opposed the use of force to achieve this goal.

Thus the problem of differences between the United States and some Allies on how to respond effectively and confront the threats of WMD stems from their lack of a common threat assessment. Without such an assessment, it is difficult for NATO to develop a common response.

The U.S. view of these threats has dramatically changed since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Prior to this catastrophic event, U.S. attention to the threat of asymmetric warfare through terrorism and/or WMD was less sustained and focused than it has subsequently become. The attacks of 2001 caused the United States to develop its *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*.<sup>56</sup> This strategy is based on a threat assessment and integrated into the overall national security strategy. The Allies in NATO have divergent threat assessments, and these differences among the Allies complicate the development and acquisition of capabilities and the definition of action policies in specific contingencies.

## **1. Threat Assessment**

One of the primary obstacles that the Allies face in meeting the challenges of WMD is the lack of a shared threat assessment. Although the Allies have a common understanding of global threats, they disagree on the severity and/or immediacy of these threats and on which policy instruments to employ in specific cases.

The disagreements over how to deal with the threat of WMD were evident, as suggested earlier, in the case of the disarming Iraq. The Allies fundamentally disagreed over the severity and immediacy of the WMD threats posed by Saddam Hussein's regime. Although the Allies agreed that Iraq probably possessed weapons of mass destruction,

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<sup>56</sup> U.S. Government, *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, December 2002), available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/12/WMDStrategy.pdf>

Differences persist, however, about the threat dimension that derive from these conclusions. First, what is the time frame for the development of nuclear weapons and for advancing the biological and chemical weapons programs? ...[F]or the purpose of a serious threat assessment it will be important to agree on a time frame within which Iraq might be able to develop nuclear weapons. This time frame will be decisive for the ability to test alternative instruments to deter Saddam from further pursuing his weapons programs, e.g. diplomacy backed by force.<sup>57</sup>

Elizabeth Pond, a prominent American analyst of German and European affairs, summarized the differences in judgment between the U.S. government and the European governments opposed to the U.S.-led military campaign (above all, Belgium, France, and Germany) as follows:

At the end of the day, then, the question the Americans asked was: Is it better to get rid of Saddam Hussein now—or later, after he has acquired nuclear weapons that could kill millions? Their answer was “now.”

Conversely, the questions the Europeans asked were: Why is the wily Saddam Hussein more dangerous than the rash North Koreans, with their more advanced nuclear program and propensity to export missiles and weapons to the highest bidder? And would an invasion of Iraq fulfill the criteria of a just war in terms of proportionality, exhaustion of all non-violent means, and probability of diminishing rather than augmenting evil? Their answer was “no.”<sup>58</sup>

Although the United States has been aware of WMD threats for decades, the terrorist attacks it suffered in 2001 have brought a higher sense of urgency to the government and the American people about dealing with this challenge effectively. The U.S. view of the WMD threat holds that it is “substantial, growing and requires immediate and cooperative threat reduction measures.”<sup>59</sup>

The United States has a more global view of international security challenges than some of the European Allies. While France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and others take a global view, for some Allies the focus of security is primarily on Europe’s

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<sup>57</sup> Christoph Schwegmann, "What Kind of Threat, for Whom and When? Towards a Common Threat Assessment," available at the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies website: <http://www.aicgs.org/research/focus2002/schwegmann.shtml>

<sup>58</sup> Elizabeth Pond, “The Greek Tragedy of NATO,” *Internationale Politik Transatlantic Edition* 1, (Spring 2003): 7. <http://www.dgap.org/english/tip/tip0301/pond.htm>

<sup>59</sup> Bryan Bender, "Threat Assessment: U.S., Europe hold Divergent Views of WMD Threat," *Global Security Newswire* 15 November 2002, available at [http://nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues/2002/11/15/3s.html](http://nti.org/d_newswire/issues/2002/11/15/3s.html)

immediate geographic periphery. According to Robert Kagan, the more global and urgent view of security taken by the United States has led it to deal with real or potential adversaries by favoring “policies of coercion rather than persuasion, emphasizing punitive sanctions over inducements to better behavior, the stick over the carrot.”<sup>60</sup>

In the words of the *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*, “Because deterrence may not succeed, and because of the potentially devastating consequences of WMD use against our forces and civilian population, U.S. military forces and appropriate civilian agencies must have the capability to defend against WMD-armed adversaries, including in appropriate cases through preemptive measures.”<sup>61</sup> In the case of the war against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq in 2003, the United States acted with the actual combat participation of only a few allies (Australia, Poland, and the United Kingdom). Despite months of consultations and negotiations with the NATO allies and the United Nations, the United States was prepared to take unilateral action if necessary.

While some European Allies disagreed with the U.S. decision to resort to the use of force, others strongly supported the United States. In the months prior to the 2003 war in Iraq, for example, several European leaders expressed support for the U.S. approach to the WMD disarmament of Iraq. In an article in January 2003, eight European leaders (representing Britain, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, and Spain) called “for unity with the U.S. position, further shifting the global political calculus toward support for war.”<sup>62</sup> In February 2003, ten Eastern European leaders (representing Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia) also came out in support of the United States. These

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<sup>60</sup> Robert Kagan, “Power and Weakness,” *Policy Review* 113 (June 2002): 1, available at [http://www.policyreview.org/JUN02/kagan\\_print.html](http://www.policyreview.org/JUN02/kagan_print.html)

<sup>61</sup> U.S. Government, *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, December 2002), p.3, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/12/WMDStrategy.pdf>

<sup>62</sup> Marc Champion, “Eight European Leaders Voice Their Support for U.S. on Iraq: Letter from Group of Countries Isolates France, Germany, Smooths Path to War,” *Wall Street Journal*, 30 January 2003, available at <http://ebird.dtic.mil/Jan2003/e20030130150375.html>

ten countries “—all aspirants to NATO membership---have united behind a strongly worded statement of support for the United States in a further sign of the increasingly polarized positions in Europe toward a possible war in Iraq.”<sup>63</sup>

The case of Iraq illustrates the divisions among the Allies concerning specific WMD threats. France and Germany, for example, believed that Iraq could continue to be contained and deterred in order to prevent the use of its WMD against any of its neighbors. These two NATO Allies argued that UN inspections in Iraq should be given more time, thereby allowing diplomatic efforts to continue as well. In addition, France and Germany stated that additional UN inspectors should be sent to Iraq to aid in the inspection efforts. Conversely, the United States and some other countries did not agree with this recommendation of continued containment and opted to use military force to disarm Iraq. When plans were being made for the war with Iraq, Belgium, France, and Germany all temporarily “blocked plans to send planes and missiles to defend Turkey,”<sup>64</sup> another NATO Ally.<sup>65</sup>

However, not all of the Allies shared the opinions of these three countries. The United States found support from other NATO Allies, including Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. London and Warsaw contributed both troops and equipment to conduct the military campaign in Iraq. However, divisions within the Alliance have led to a shift in U.S. policy concerning coalition building for conducting military operations. According to U.S. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, “[W]ars can benefit from coalitions of the willing, to be sure. But they should not be fought by committee. The mission must determine the coalition, and the coalition must not determine the mission. If it does, the mission will be dumbed down to the lowest common denominator, and we can’t afford that.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> “New Allies Back U.S. Iraq Policy,” *International Herald Tribune*, 6 February 2003, available at <http://ebird.dtic.mil/Feb2003/e20030206152244.html>

<sup>64</sup> Associated Press, “NATO Delays Iraq Military Plan,” 29 January 2003, available at <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/unmovic/2003/0129nato.htm>

<sup>65</sup> This question was not resolved until 16 February 2003, when the Alliance’s Defense Planning Committee (a body in which France chooses not to participate) made the necessary decisions.

<sup>66</sup> Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, remarks at National Defense University, Washington, D.C., 31 January 2002, available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2002/s20020131-secdef.html>

Some observers argue that the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 marked the start of the disagreement in approaches by the trans-Atlantic Allies, but in fact disagreements on these issues within the Alliance have a much longer history.

## **2. Improving Response Capabilities**

According to Thérèse Delpech, Director for Strategic Studies at the French Atomic Energy Commission, it is important for the European Union (EU) to develop a shared threat assessment for the following reasons: it would lead to a strategic concept to help guide its foreign policy in the new security environment; it would cause the EU to return from the “security vacation” it has been on since the cessation of fighting on the European continent in the last century and therefore bring serious focus and attention to the current security environment; and finally, a threat assessment “is important and is needed because it will be the only way to have a serious discussion with this country, America, on the subject of precisely the threat. Currently Americans may be hyping the threat, but the truth is that Europeans overlook it.”<sup>67</sup> Tomas Ries, Senior Researcher at the National Defense College of Finland, also argues that it is important for Europe to develop a threat assessment, for “without a threat assessment there can be no strategy, and with no strategy there are no missions and no capabilities.”<sup>68</sup> As Ries’s comment suggests, the lack of a threat assessment by the EU creates a snowball effect. In other words, the absence of a shared threat assessment leads to an inability to develop common policies for correct responses. Without shared policies for responses, the capabilities required for these responses cannot be determined. It is clear that the EU, like NATO, needs to develop a catalogue of response capabilities to deal with a diverse array of contingencies.

## **B. BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS**

In addition to the absence of a common threat assessment in Europe, another major obstacle hinders the development of response capabilities for WMD contingencies

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<sup>67</sup> Thérèse Delpech, remarks prepared for panel discussion, “European Views on Proliferation Threats,” Washington, DC, 14 November 2002, available at <http://www.ceip.org/files/projects/npp/pdf/conference/lottmantranscripts/Delpech.pdf>

<sup>68</sup> Tomas Ries, “Europe- No Threat assessment, No Vision, No Security,” paper prepared for the Carnegie International Non-Proliferation Conference, 14 November 2002, Washington, DC, 2, available at <http://www.ceip.org/files/projects/npp/pdf/conference/presentation/Ries.pdf>

by NATO's European Allies. This obstacle is insufficient spending to develop the response capabilities necessary in the fight against WMD. Large capability gaps exist between the European and American Allies, with the Europeans often relying on the United States to carry the brunt of the military and budgetary burdens as they did in the 1999 Kosovo crisis. However, the proposed NATO Response Force offers an opportunity for the European Allies to improve their capabilities to deal with crises occurring far from Europe. Such capabilities are exactly what NATO needs in order to remain credible.

While some Europeans criticize what they deem a U.S. tendency towards unilateralism in world affairs, they are well aware of the fact that this tendency stems not only from different threat perceptions, but also from the unsurpassed military capabilities of the United States, from which its Allies have benefited since NATO's creation in 1949. Throughout the Cold War, the United States outspent other NATO Allies on defense capabilities in absolute terms, although some Allies (e.g., Greece and Turkey) spent more than the United States as a percentage of GDP. Although this spending gap has narrowed since the end of the Cold War, "the U.S. continues to spend 3% of its GDP on defence: 50% more than the average of the five largest EU member states."<sup>69</sup> The capabilities of some European Allies are mainly, although not solely, for conducting operations within Europe whereas the United States is capable of conducting large military operations in any region.

This lower importance given to defense spending by Europeans can be partly attributed to their assumption that "the U.S. can be relied upon to come to Europe's aid in the event of a direct external attack."<sup>70</sup> The United States and the other larger allies will have to accept their responsibilities in bearing a major share of the burden. As Todd Sandler and Keith Hartley observe, "NATO's new missions to limit nuclear proliferation

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<sup>69</sup> Malcolm Chalmers, "A Transatlantic New Deal: What Europe Should Pay to Promote U.S. Engagement," *The Foreign Policy Centre*, Policy Brief No. 2, p. 8, available at <http://www.fpc.org.uk/reports>

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

and to address crises that affect its interests produce a large portion of nonexcludable benefits in terms of promoting alliancewide and worldwide stability. ...Thus there is a greater tendency for free riding, particularly among the smaller allies.’<sup>71</sup>

Although NATO’s European Allies will not be able to match the military capabilities of the United States, it is important for these Allies to invest in their defense in order to defend their own security interests, to keep the United States engaged in Europe, and to be able to conduct operations alongside their trans-Atlantic partner. This is precisely what the Alliance hopes to achieve through the new NATO Response Force, the Prague Capabilities Commitment, and the other measures approved at the NATO Summit in Prague in November 2002.

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<sup>71</sup> Todd Sandler and Keith Hartley, *The Political Economy of NATO: Past, Present, and into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New York and Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 241.

## V. CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined NATO's efforts to prevent and counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, a serious threat to the territories, populations, and military forces of Allied nations. The findings of the UN Special Commission, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and other organizations in Iraq after the 1990-1991 Gulf War brought the acute reality of this threat to the forefront of NATO's attention. By 1994, the Alliance had developed an agreed policy framework that resulted in the establishment of the Senior Political-Military Group on Proliferation and the Senior Defense Group on Proliferation to address the political and military dimensions of the threat. Their findings regarding proliferation threats led to the launching of the WMD Initiative announced in the Washington Summit Communiqué in 1999.

The WMD Initiative has contributed to NATO's continued nonproliferation and counterproliferation efforts. The initiative's biggest achievement has been the establishment of the WMD Center. The center is tasked with assessing the threat of WMD proliferation and appropriate responses. In addition, the WMD Center has developed data repositories which contain shared intelligence on weapons proliferation; assessments of proliferation issues, especially concerning developments in areas on NATO's territorial periphery; and assessments on the development of biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological weapons and associated delivery means.

However, NATO still faces a variety of challenges to successfully counter the threat of WMD proliferation. The most important challenge the Alliance faces is developing a common threat assessment. Without consensus on the gravity of specific threats, the Alliance will be unable to develop common policies for response capabilities. The debates within NATO and the United Nations about how to ensure the WMD disarmament of Iraq in 2002-2003 revealed that the Allies disagreed over the degree to which Iraq actually posed a threat, and about how to respond to the threat. The United States and the United Kingdom called for the use of force to depose Saddam Hussein, while Belgium, France, and Germany pressed for a diplomatic solution.



Another challenge the Alliance faces has to do with burden-sharing. Since many European Allies do not view the threat of WMD with the same urgency that the United States does or favor non-military policy instruments to deal with it, they are reluctant to spend on military capabilities at levels corresponding to U.S. military investments. This leaves the United States carrying a disproportionate share of the burden to continue to develop such capabilities. This reluctance to spend by the Europeans poses a great challenge to the United States because these nations mainly rely on U.S. support in the event of an external attack. The United States feels that the Allies should spend more on their own defense, although the Allies have in fact contributed most of the peacekeeping troops in the Balkans since the mid 1990s.

The European Allies do, however, bring some assets to the Alliance in today's security environment. The first has to do with Europe's long experience in dealing with internal terrorism. This experience with terrorism has "led to the development of relatively strong capabilities for countering terrorism domestically, including relatively good intelligence and security assets and routines."<sup>72</sup> While the United States has sought intelligence on internal and external threats, European governments have focused their intelligence efforts on internal and external terrorist threats in perhaps a more balanced way. The United States has become more focused on internal security challenges since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. Since these attacks, the United States has created the Department of Homeland Security to focus on terrorist threats.

Another area in which the European Allies may surpass the United States concerns awareness of the "longer term soft security priorities." These include nation-building assets in the form of "economic power to promote globalisation (the free-market approach) and development aid (the welfare approach)," and "longstanding European expertise in peace-keeping and, since the Balkans, peace building."<sup>73</sup>

Although the NATO Allies face substantial challenges in meeting the threats posed by WMD, they also have strengths that may enable them to prevent or counter

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<sup>72</sup> Tomas Ries, "Europe- No Threat assessment, No Vision, No Security," (paper prepared for the Carnegie International Non-Proliferation Conference, 14 November 2002, Washington, DC), 2, available at <http://www.ceip.org/files/projects/npp/pdf/conference/presentation/Ries.pdf>

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

WMD attacks. It seems possible that Canada, the United States, and the European Allies, each possessing different strengths, including the military might of the United States and the extensive experience of some European allies in effectively dealing with internal terrorism, may complement each other in pursuing the goals of the Alliance and countering the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction.

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